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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 PRAGUE 000692

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [MCAP](#) [MASS](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EZ](#) [RS](#)  
SUBJECT: U/S TAUSCHER'S NOVEMBER 16 VISIT TO PRAGUE: CZECHS  
SEEK MORE INFORMATION ON SEW BEFORE DECISION

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Mary Thompson-Jones, reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: During Arms Control and International Security Under Secretary Ellen Tauscher's November 16 meetings in Prague, Czech officials signaled they wanted more technical information on shared early warning (SEW) before making a decision on whether to go ahead. U/S Tauscher said the U.S. could send experts as early as January. Tauscher emphasized that although the U.S. has changed its missile defense (MD) architecture, it had not changed its relationship with the Czech Republic (CR) and wanted the CR to be in on the ground floor of the new MD phased adaptive approach (PAA). Czech officials expressed concern about whether NATO allies would cooperate in the PAA, particularly regarding burden-sharing. They also emphasized the importance of moving ahead with joint research and development, and with developing the civilian side of bilateral relations. End Summary.

FM Kohout: Ready to Engage  
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¶2. (C) FM Jan Kohout said he understood U/S Tauscher's visit as a continuation of her September 17 visit laying out the new PAA architecture and of Vice President Biden's October 23 visit. Tauscher praised the constructive Czech response to PAA and explained that the U.S. wanted the Czechs in "on the ground floor."

¶3. (C) Kohout asked for details on the SEW system. U/S Tauscher and DAS Frank Rose outlined the basic features of SEW. The U/S offered to send SEW experts as soon as January to explain the system in more detail. The U/S told Kohout "we have changed out architecture but not our relationship;" the FM said the CR was "ready to engage."

¶4. (C) U/S Tauscher briefed Kohout on the status of START follow-on negotiations, CFE and U.S.-Russia relations. Returning to U.S.-Czech relations, Kohout emphasized the importance of civilian strategic cooperation in addition to cooperation on defense. Kohout said the CR hoped for concrete proposals in this area.

CSSD Chair: Forward Leaning, Perhaps  
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¶5. (C) CSSD Chairman Jiri Paroubek, long accustomed to hearing from visiting administration officials on MD, was surprisingly forward-leaning in his conversation with U/S Tauscher. He acknowledged that "now it appears there is a concrete threat which changes the situation," and "it seems like this is a big difference with the new project. It is based on a real, existing threat, rather than on a virtual one." He welcomed the idea of a NATO-ized system, saying that was an important factor for CSSD.

¶6. (C) However, in a Czech Press Agency interview published just after his meeting, Paroubek said his party would call for a debate among experts as well as a public debate on any future Czech participation in the project. (Comment: This tendency to dodge difficult issues by deferring to public opinion polls is precisely why Paroubek withdrew his support for the previous MD proposal -- public opposition ran 65-70% against. End Comment.)

DFM Pojar: Sense of Urgency  
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¶7. (S) Tauscher met with Deputy Foreign Minister Tomas Pojar before the two joined a larger MFA meeting. Pojar, who will depart his position to become the Czech Ambassador to Israel in late January, was seized with a sense of urgency. He complained about the lack of progress on intelligence sharing, offering two concrete examples.

¶8. (C) Pojar seemed impassioned about moving forward on PAA. He pressed for another round of talks soon, saying "we simply have to get moving." He cited the importance of showing the public and politicians that the new PAA would be based on mutual benefits, highlighting research and development. U/S Tauscher agreed to provide him a schedule for technical team engagements and way forward on missile defense research and development cooperation. Pojar pushed very hard on the issue of a Czech liaison officer permanently assigned to the Missile Defense Agency (MDA). He insisted the BMDA agreement already provides for two liaison officers, one at MDA headquarters and one in Colorado Springs. He said a Czech presence would offer a combination of political

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symbolism and practical effects. Ambassador Kolar noted he has a meeting with General O'Reilly on this issue on December 18.

¶9. (C) Finally, Pojar urged action on issues still pending after the November 6 High Level Defense Group (HLDG). He pushed for a faster decision process on an outstanding Czech request to sell its L-159 plane to the Afghan National Air Force. He complained the U.S. approach was too rigid and the decision process too lengthy. He also noted that the Czechs are ready to throw in the towel on the C-130s. He said the MOD had told him that it cannot afford the 111 million USD price tag. This, he said, highlighted the importance of moving in areas where we can make real progress.

MFA/MoD Meeting: Iran, PAA  
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¶10. (S) After meeting with DFM Pojar, the U/S and her delegation met with a larger group of MFA and MoD officials, chaired on the Czech side by Pojar. The Czechs received a briefing from the U.S. delegation on the status of Iranian missile development and proliferation activities. The Czechs asked several question about Iran,s BM-25 missile and DFM Pojar stated his desire to see Russia admit that the BM-25 was the Russian SS-N-6. DFM Pojar noted that Russia had a different perception of the threat. U/S Tauscher noted that the U.S. was working with Russia on a Joint Threat Assessment that had been announced during the July Summit meetings between Presidents Obama and Medvedev.

¶11. (C) Deputy Assistant Secretary for Verification, Compliance and Implementation Frank Rose briefed on the PAA. DFM Pojar asked pointedly about whether the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) budget would be sufficient to support the planned SM-3 missile development and deployment. Pojar and MFA Security Policy Department Director Ivan Pocuch also questioned whether the U.S. could obtain full NATO consensus to support the PAA and expressed skepticism about prospects for burden-sharing via NATO common funding.

¶12. (C) DAS Rose and NSC Defense Strategy, Forces and

Resources Director Kristie Canegallo detailed how MDA funding would indeed support SM-3 development. EUR/PRA Deputy Director Kathleen Morenski briefed the Czechs on next steps on the PAA at NATO. U/S Tauscher said that although there would be challenges, the U.S. has made a decision to move ahead with PAA because of its Article 5 commitments and the need to protect U.S. troops and assets. She noted that other allies had capabilities that would fit within PAA. DAS Rose said that the upgrade of NATO's ALTBMD command and control backbone was achievable and would provide a logical avenue through which allies could participate in PAA through common funding. DFM Pojar stated his belief that the U.S. approach on funding was correct as allies would be reluctant to fund a territorial defense. He described defense spending by some NATO allies as "shameful."

¶13. (C) On bilateral relations, DFM Pojar said research and development cooperation was "crucial" but claimed that "not much is moving" in this area. Pojar emphasized the CR is "not seeking a payoff," but rather, deeper cooperation with the U.S. He also stated that the Czech Republic would continue to be supportive of missile defense at NATO.

Russia, CFE, NATO MAP  
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¶14. (C) At a lunch he hosted for a smaller group, DFM Pojar discussed Russia, calling it "relevant to many issues." Pojar said he favored clear and firm dialogue with Russia, without illusions. Pojar said he believed Putin, not Medvedev, is the real power in Russia. Pojar cited increased Russian espionage in the CR and other Central and Eastern European countries. He doubted Russia would again this winter cut off gas through Ukraine, although he said a short cutoff might actually be helpful in concentrating EU minds on energy security. U/S Tauscher told Pojar that the "reset" in U.S.-Russia relations had yielded cooperation in several areas, but not across the board.

¶15. (C) Pojar asked about U.S. thinking on CFE. U/S Tauscher said that most allies did not want to stop data sharing this year, and the U.S. was still considering how to move forward and seeking allies' ideas. Pojar predicted no change in Russian behavior on CFE, but was not certain that halting data exchange in 2010 was the right solution. Security Policy Department Director Pocuch said he saw less harm in continuing to share data compared to "life without CFE." DAS

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Rose said the U.S. was currently reviewing the future of CFE, and exploring a number of potential options such as adapting the adapted treaty and increasing confidence building measures; however, he noted that an adapted treaty would face Congressional opposition as long as Russia failed to comply with the existing treaty.

¶16. (C) Pojar asked about offering NATO MAP to Montenegro; U/S Tauscher said the U.S. is still reviewing the matter. Pojar said he favored offering MAP to Montenegro, even though it would upset Georgia, because it would demonstrate NATO expansion is not over. U/S Tauscher asked what could be offered to Ukraine and Georgia. On Ukraine, Pojar suggested that NATO should wait until after upcoming elections. On Georgia, he suggested working through existing channels of cooperation on steps that a MAP would require. Pojar said the CR would continue to sell Georgia military supplies, but needed guarantees equipment would not be "stupidly misused" and particularly noted concerns about the Polish Grom MANPADS.

PAA and NATO Allies  
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¶17. (C) Czech Ambassador to the U.S. Petr Kolar asked about other NATO allies' participation in PAA. U/S Tauscher said there was wide interest, and that the U.S. was talking to the

CR and Poland in the greatest depth due to their willingness to participate in the previous MD architecture. U/S Tauscher said that the U.S. would also be talking in depth to southern-tier European countries, since the U.S. planned PAA deployments in that region.

¶18. (C) Pocuch again expressed concern about political reluctance in NATO to move ahead with PAA. Pojar expressed concerns about Turkey's political situation as well, wondering what kind of ally it would be in a decade. U/S Tauscher said the U.S. will move ahead with PAA to fulfill Article 5 and to meet the threat. DAS Rose said that NATO cooperation was achievable; Germany and France had sent positive signals. Pojar agreed that France "still has self-preservation instincts."

#### SEW and Czech Domestic Politics

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¶19. (C) Charge asked Pojar about the timing of Czech acceptance of SEW in relation to the Czech domestic politics. Pojar pointed out that Czech SEW participation would not require parliamentary approval, but the Czechs needed more information before deciding on proceeding. On timing, Pojar said it would be better if the SEW decision did not come right before parliamentary elections (Note: Currently scheduled for May 2010. End note).

¶20. (C) On SEW, Tauscher suggested to Pojar the U.S. could send experts in January or February, with a possible Czech decision in March; Pojar called this "possible." Ambassador Kolar worried SEW could be used politically, pointing out that Social Democrat Party (CSSD) chair Paroubek (who opposed Czech participation in the prior MD architecture) had called for a "public debate" about the Czech role in PAA. Pojar re-emphasized the importance of getting technical details on SEW; Kolar suggested Paroubek should also be briefed "to give him a chance to say yes." Assuming Paroubek's support, Kolar saw no problem in going forward with SEW under the present interim government.

#### Former PM TopolaneK Supportive

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¶21. (C) In his meeting with U/S Tauscher, former PM TopolaneK said he supported the MD radar site in the CR proposed by the previous U.S. administration in order to secure a U.S. presence in Central Europe. However, he was pleased to hear the U.S. had adapted MD to an "immediate danger" and was working through NATO. He expressed support for locating "whatever" was needed for PAA in the CR.

¶22. (C) TopolaneK, who had just arrived from an energy security forum in Budapest, said that Russian foreign policy no longer revolved around "bombs and tanks, but around gas, oil and rubles." He expressed concern about Russian influence in the Czech energy sector and asked for U.S. help.

¶23. (C) TopolaneK also discussed the upcoming party congress of his Civic Democrat Party (ODS), expressing concern that it could result in his losing his position as ODS chair.

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¶24. (U) U/S Tauscher has cleared this message.  
Thompson-Jones